

leisure, it might take a year for the presidents of state societies to get a staff in line for such work, unless volunteers come forward.

It seems to me that precisely this kind of service is possible for our married members, of whom we must have hundreds all over the country. Many are married to physicians, and we should be able to look to them for the lion's share of this preliminary inquiry.

I hope, also that every state society will consider this projected and really vast undertaking at its next meeting, for it will require the coöperation of all to be pushed through. Those states especially which have gained their legislation may have opportunity to devote considerable time to ways and means—should begin by re-reading Mrs. Crane's and Mrs. Lupinski's articles, and then work at systematizing data regarding almshouses in their states.

Work of this nature has already been undertaken by nurses—namely our public-spirited and altruistic leaders in Virginia, Miss Cabaniss and her co-workers. Some five years ago they attempted to rescue the sick of the almshouse, and have actually succeeded in placing one graduate nurse there in charge, and have secured good and kind women to work as assistants.

It is also interesting in this connection to note the crusade now being conducted in England by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and the Matrons Council for skilled nursing in prisons. The spirit of unselfish devotion still lives in our profession, even though the modern spirit of commercialism may not be denied, and if our great and wide-spread associations determine to champion the cause of the almshouse and prison patients, in coöperation with that tremendous army of club women, potent for good, we may all feel sure that it is possible to do for them just what has been done for the hospitals.

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## AMUSING INCIDENTS OF A SCHOOL NURSE

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To the nurse and doctor alike in their drama-like careers, it is the interspersing of the comedy and amusing incidents, that prevent the continuous watching of others suffer, from playing on their nerves. It acts as a check valve against monotony. A few small tales in the life of a school nurse, may prove interesting and instructive.

The following amusing incident shows the strategy of the nurse in curing a bad case of uncleanness. There was a boy in one of the

lower grades, who persistently came to school dirty, even though on several occasions he was sent home with a note to his parents, requesting their attention to his condition. It met with no response, so the nurse had the boy meet her at the end of the session. She accompanied him to his home, and scolded the mother for her neglect. She then proceeded to give the child the much needed bath as an instruction to the parent. The mother seemed delighted to watch the nurse give her boy such a thorough cleaning, that was going to relieve her of the job of a similar operation for the next six months. When the nurse finished, she compelled the mother to pay her ten cents for carfare, the usual charge of a visiting nurse. The parent reluctantly paid the fee, and upbraided the child for not keeping clean. The fear of another visit from the nurse, with an outlay of ten cents, has caused the parent to keep a careful watch on the child's cleanliness ever since.

Another child who was extremely dirty was taken home by the nurse, and the mother was asked to show how she washed him, as she insisted that she bathed him every morning. She vanished from the room and returned in a few moments with a teacupful of water. She drew the child close to her, and proceeded with her so-called daily bath. After placing her hand in the teacup, she rubbed it wet over the child's face, and proudly proclaimed to the nurse, "and I do it every day." The nurse's mention of a bath tub, wash rag, etc., was a revelation.

In contrast to this conservative mother was a strenuous Italian woman who, when informed that her child needed a bath, unceremoniously pulled off the boy's dirty sweater, and carried him to the hydrant in the alley. She then held the frightened lad under the full force of the stream, and ran a whole new bar of soap, grasped firmly in the other hand, up and down the child's back. The picture put to shame the famous advertisement of a certain soap, "You Dirty Boy!" Her method would have been effective, had she not dried him with the end of her dirty skirt.

It is surprising how children become attached to a nurse, and are anxious to be sent to her for treatment. They will come to her on the slightest pretence of an ailment, and sometimes these excuses are amusing. One child said her mother had a headache. Another claimed he fell out of bed and wanted some medicine to prevent such occurrences. Questions are asked such as "Mother wants something to cure baby's toothache." A number of children beg permission from their teachers to be sent to the nurse, and examination proves a scratch that would require the use of a magnifying glass to detect. The appreciation from these youthful patients is sometimes impressing and gratifying, and is

often shared by the parents. A child who suffered for a long time from a bad eczema, and who was cured by the attentions of the nurse, presented her with a small ivory locket crudely carved by his father. Letters of thanks and gratitude from parents are numerous. The combination of spelling which would be approved by the "Revised Spelling Commission" and a disregard for grammar, make some interesting and pathetic reading. The following is a sample:

Der nurs:—I lov yu becos yu mak well mi Mary. It is gud that de schul has such a gud womin to luk after de childen, my usbend tanks yu to. God bless yu.

Mrs. ————.

Small trinkets and gifts at Christmas are numerous. I was never more impressed by the appreciation shown by these children, than on a visit to Baltimore. The nurse, whose birthday was on that day, was the recipient of flowers, potted plants, and small gifts from many of the children who felt her gentle kindness in moments of need. To them she is truly the "Visiting Angel of the School."

Possibly many doctors and nurses have noticed that whenever a child is asked to put out its tongue to have its throat examined, he involuntarily at the same time stretches both arms away from his sides and widely separates his fingers.

Two Russian boys, brothers, were sent to the visiting physician, with a note from the teacher, stating that these children must be near-sighted as they see nothing on the blackboards, and only gaze wildly at the books. The boys were placed fifteen feet from a test card of letters, and were asked to read. Their reading, in badly broken English, and the naming of any letter that came foremost in the mind, showed they were guessing. On questioning them, they said they had been only three months in this country, and as yet knew no English. A test card of Jewish letters was substituted for the English one, and with grace and ease the proud youngsters read the smallest type. A letter was sent to their teacher, stating that the boys were unacquainted with the English language, but if given three more months, would head their class.

A child of the second grade was being examined for its vision, before a test card. He apparently had defective eyesight or did not know the letters. "Don't you know you ABCs?" was asked by the physician. "No." "How long have you been in school?" "Three years." "Three years in school, and don't know your letters?" "No, and you come to the school every day and don't know how many steps you climb."

While we agree that the poor will always be among us, the school nurse will not agree with one of the mothers who tried to impress her that vermin is a necessary neighbor. The nurse sent for the mother of a child with an unclean head that was receiving no attention. The mother asked the reason for sending for her, and when informed her child had vermin in her hair, answered: "Is that why you sent for me? that is nothing, every one has some of them."

That both the doctor and the nurse must be most explicit and plain in their instructions to a patient or the attendant is shown by the following incident. A visiting nurse was informed by a mother that the doctor had ordered suppositories for her baby, one to be inserted into the rectum every two hours, but the things did not melt as the doctor said they would. The nurse asked to see the suppositories and to be shown how the mother inserted them. She found that the druggist had dispensed them in small glass vials to keep them from melting, and the parent had inserted vial and all. Fortunately only four hours had elapsed, and the physician had only two vials to extract.

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### RED CROSS WORK

THE annual meeting of the Connecticut Branch of the American National Red Cross was held at Hartford, Connecticut, on November 18. The treasurer reported that thirty-four hundred and eighty-seven dollars and ninety-four cents had been received, and that twenty-eight hundred and fourteen dollars and thirty-six cents had been expended, either in relief work or as contributions to the Central Red Cross treasury, with the exception of a small amount needed for administration expense.

Five graduate, registered nurses had been added to the enrollment during the year, making a total enrollment for the state of fifteen. Each nurse is furnished by the National Society with a handsome badge on which her name and national number are engraved, and, when accidents occur, these badges will doubtless be of service to the wearers, guaranteeing their official position, compelling recognition, and making it possible for them to give competent first aid to the injured.

The report illustrates the importance of these badges with one or two instances. One was that of a Red Cross nurse who went to the scene of a trolley accident and, having no badge, was not allowed to go to work until she was, by chance, recognized by one of the physicians. A member of the state board of examination and registration of nurses says that the Red Cross badge is the best letter of introduction which a